Setting up of a Task Force for radio broadcasters

816. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Private broadcasters have requested Government for setting up of a Task Force to address the issues faced by the Radio Broadcasters; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Task Force has been constituted.

Introduction of CAS

817. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are not pushing CAS in haste;

(b) if not, how this is going to benefit the viewers as well as small cable TV operators;

(c) whether the Multi System Operators (MSO) are likely to benefit most; and

(d) if so, the objective behind the introduction of CAS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The viewers will be benefited in the following ways:—

(i) Government has specified Rs. 72/- (Plus taxes) as the maximum price of basic service tier, consisting of not less than 30 free-to-air channels of different genres of entertainment, news, sports, children's programmes and music. Additional free-to-air channels would also be available to subscribers within the said maximum amount. For viewing these, STB will not be required.

(ii) Consumers will have the choice to pay for only those pay channels which they choose to watch; and

(iii) have a control over the content, they wish to view.

(iv) It has been made obligatory for cable operators to make provisions for rent, security deposit, repair and maintenance of Set Top Boxes (STB).

(v) Some MSOs/Cable Operators have come out with consumer-friendly schemes through which the STBs will be made available to consumers.

(vi) Government has reduced the duty on import of STB and its components to make them more affordable.

(d) The main objectives behind the introduction of CAS are:—

(i) To save the consumers for arbitrary and exorbitant hikes in subscription rates;

(ii) To enable the consumers to choose pay for only those pay channels which they wish to watch.

(iii) To bring in transparency in the figures of subscriber base and thereby improve revenue collections.

24-Hour DD news channel

818. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of the new 24-hour news channels DD could not improve its overall coverage in getting 'breaking' news;

(b) whether Government thought of improving on these lines;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (d) Prasar Bharati have informed that the 24 hours news channel is yet to be launched. However, Doordarshan is covering breaking news story in its news bulletins and by scrolling whenever necessary.

Prasar Bharati has informed that steps taken by Doordarshan to improve news coverage include round the clock operationalisation of